

Message Text

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22 10

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 SAM-01

EUR-12 /064 W

----- 089794

R 140840Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4329

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 0195

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: OGEN, SN, APUB

SUBJECT: GOS IMPOSES NEW PROCEDURES FOR PUBLISHING, IMPORTING AND
DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION MATERIALS

1. EMBASSY RECEIVED DECEMBER 29 CIRCULAR NOTE SENT TO
ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR MISSIONS SETTING FORTH
PROCEDURES MISSIONS MUST FOLLOW WHEN PUBLISHING,
IMPORTING AND DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION MATERIALS IN
ANY FORM. WE DELAYED REPORTING THIS DEVELOPMENT IN
ORDER TO CANVASS THE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO DETERMINE
THEIR VIEWS AND DISCOVER WHETHER THEY HAD ANY INFO
WHICH WOULD EXPLAIN GOS ACTION. FOLLOWING IS BRIEF
SUMMARY OF NEW PROCEDURES.

(A) MISSIONS WISHING TO PUBLISH INFORMATION
MATERIALS MUST APPLY FOR EXECUTION TO MFA
UNDER SECTION 32 OF THE NEWSPAPER AND
PRINTING PRESSES ACT OF 1974. APPLICATIONS
MUST PROVIDE FULL PARTICULARS OF MATERIALS
TO BE PUBLISHED, WITH TITLES AND FREQUENCY
OF PUBLICATION. THREE COPIES WILL HAVE TO
BE SUBMITTED TO MFA PRIOR TO DISTRIBUTION.

(B) MFA ADVANCE WRITTEN APPROVAL IS REQUIRED FOR
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IMPORTATION OF INFORMATION MATERIALS, INCLUDING

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS OF HOME GOVERNMENT, MEANT
FOR DISTRIBUTION IN SINGAPORE.

(C) AUTHORIZED OFFICER APPOINTED UNDER UNDESIRABLE
PUBLICATIONS ACT MAY REFUSE ENTRY TO ANY
MATERIALS DEEMED PREJUDICIAL.

(D) PRIOR WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM MFA IS REQUIRED
BEFORE MISSIONS CAN DISTRIBUTE ANY PUBLICATIONS
TO SHCOOLS IN SINGAPORE.

(E) FILMS AND TAPES INTENDED FOR USE BY RADIO
AND TV SINGAPORE CAN BE SENT DIRECTLY TO
DIRECTOR OF BROADCASTING. FILMS INTENDED FOR
EXHIBITION TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS
MUST BEAR CENSORSHIP CERTIFICATE FROM THE
BOARD OF FILM CENSORS.

2. TEXT OF NOTE WAS PUBLISHED IN NEW NATION
JANUARY 10, WITH ONE UNIDENTIFIED FOREIGN
EMBASSY
SPOKESMAN SAYING, "WE WILL COMPLY AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, BUT
WE ARE UNCLEAR AS TO WHETHER THESE STIPULATIONS COVER
PRESS RELEASES."

3. NOTE HAS GENERATED CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION AND
SOME CONCERN AMONG DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN SINGAPORE,
ESPECIALLY PROVISION REQUIRING MISSIONS TO SUBMIT
THREE COPIES OF INFORMATION MATERIALS TO MFA PRIOR TO
DISTRIBUTION. CONSEQUENTLY, SUBJECT MAY COME UP AT
NEXT MEETING OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS SCHEDULED FOR
JANUARY 29. EMBASSY BELIEVES NOTE ESSENTIALLY DIRECTED
AGAINST EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES REPRESENTING COMMUNIST
GOVERNMENTS. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE GENERAL HAS
IDPPORTEDLY GIYTRIBUTED LOCALLY A FLOOD OF PROPAGANDA
WHICH HAS AROUSED GOS IRE, AND IT MAY WELL
BE THAT MFA NOTE IS DESIGNED TO BRING THIS SITUATION
UNDER CONTROL AS WELL AS PREVENT OTHER COMMUNIST EMBASSIES
FROM ENGAGING IN SIMILAR ACTIVITY. NEW CONTROL SYSTEM
MAY ALSO BE DESIGNED TO PREPARE FOR ULTIMATE ESTABLISHMENT
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OF PRC EMBASSY IN SINAPORE.

4. PAO HAS INFORMALLY DISCUSSED PROBLEM WITH UK, AUSTRALIAN,
AND NEW ZEALAND COUNTERPARTS. GENERAL CONSENSUS OF
THIS GROUP, SUBJECT TO APPROVAL OF RESPECTIVE HEADS
OF MISSION, IS THAT THEIR DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS SHOULD
GIVE MINIMAL COMPLIANCE TO THE PROVISIONS OF MFA NOTE.

5. WITH TWO POSSIBLE EXCEPTIONS, NOTE POSES NO PROBLEMS FOR USIS. ASSUMING WE ARE CORRECT IN BELIEVING NOTE DIRECTED PRIMARILY AGAINST COMMUNIST EMBASSIES, WE THINK GOS WOULD GRANT BLANKET EXEMPTION FOR LOCAL PUBLICATION OF REGULAR USIS MATERIALS AND APPROVE IMPORTATION OF THE SAME. (SEE PARAS 1A AND 1B ABOVE.) WE HAVE RECEIVED NO CRITICISM FROM GOVERNMENT OF IMPORTED MATERIALS (E.G., HORIZONS AND WORLD TODAY) AND DO NOT BELIEVE THEY WOULD BE REFUSED ENTRY. PARA 1D DOES NOT APPLY SINCE USIS DOES NOT DISTRIBUTE ANY MATERIALS TO SCHOOLS. USIS IS ALREADY COMPLYING WITH PARA 1E WITH RESPECT TO FILMS.

6. ONE POSSIBLE PROBLEM RAISED BY MFA NOTE IS LAST SENTENCE OF PARA 1A, REQUIRING PROVISION OF THREE COPIES OF PUBLICATIONS TO MFA IN ADVANCE OF DISTRIBUTION. POST ALSO IMPORTS VTR'S THROUGH POUCH FOR SELECTIVE SHOWINGS AND THERE MAY BE SOME QUESTION WHETHER 1E APPLIES TO THEM. SINCE PARA 1A DOES NOT EXPLICITLY STATE THAT MFA MUST GRANT APPROVAL PRIOR TO DISTRIBUTION, WE PLAN TO SEND MFA THREE COPIES OF ALL PRESS RELEASES, TEXTS OF PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY SPEECHES, ETC., SLIGHTLY IN ADVANCE OF REGULAR DISTRIBUTION. WE BELIEVE THIS WILL PROBABLY SATISFY MFA; WE WOULD, OF COURSE, STRONGLY OPPOSE ANY MFA ATTEMPT TO HOLD UP REGULAR DISTRIBUTION PENDING MFA APPROVAL. FOR TIME BEING, WE WILL ALSO ASSUME THAT NOTE IS NOT DESIGNED TO COVER VTR'S.

7. UNLESS DEPARTMENT DIRECTS OTHERWISE, AMBASSADOR PLANS TO INFORM COMMONWEALTH COLLEAGUES PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR COM CONFERENCE JANUARY 16 THAT U.S. PLANS TO COMPLY MINIMALLY WITH PROVISIONS OF NOTE. IF MFA INDICATES SUBSEQUENTLY THAT THIS COMPLIANCE IS NOT SUFFICIENT, WE
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WILL TAKE MATTER UP WITH MFA INFORMALLY AND POINT OUT IMPOSSIBILITY OF USIS BEING ABLE TO CARRY OUT ITS INFORMATION PROGRAM IF ADVANCE APPROVAL OF ITS PRESS RELEASES AND OTHER REGULAR DISTRIBUTIONS IS REQUIRED. WE ARE RELUCTANT TO TAKE MATTER UP INFORMALLY NOW SINCE IT MIGHT RAISE UNNECESSARY ISSUE AND PRECIPITATE NEGATIVE GOS POSITION WHICH MIGHT NOT EMERGE IF QUESTION NOT RAISED.
HOLDRIDGE

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